

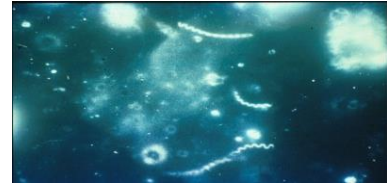
HOUSTON SYPHILIS OUTBREAK RESPONSE (SOR) UPDATE – MAY 2013

Syphilis Overview

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease that can cause long-term complications and/or death if not adequately treated. Pregnant women with syphilis can pass the disease to their unborn children and stillbirth may occur.



*Microscopic views of living
Treponema pallidum,
the bacterium that causes syphilis*



Where have we been?

In September 2012, the Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) declared a syphilis outbreak in Houston/Harris County after observing an 86% increase in the number of Primary and Secondary (P&S) syphilis cases compared to the same time period in 2011. As a result of the syphilis outbreak, the Department implemented the Syphilis Outbreak Response (SOR) Plan.

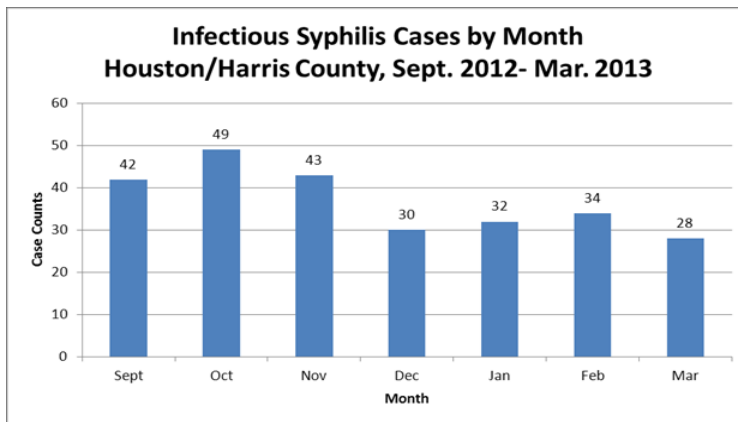
What have we accomplished?

- Informed the community of the syphilis outbreak through media releases
- Expanded STD clinic hours in HDHHS STD clinics to increase attendance capacity
- Provided syphilis treatment in non-traditional settings including outreach and field settings
- Employed protocols in STD clinics which aids in identifying new syphilis cases faster
- Improved STD intervention activities with community based organizations and private medical providers
- Re-established Mobile STD Clinic to a fully functional mode with clinical and laboratory support
- Initiated a project to provide preventive syphilis to high risk inmates in Harris County Jail
- Developed a community calendar to identify community activities and screening events

Where are we now?

Progress has been made in efforts to reduce infectious syphilis cases through syphilis outbreak response activities:

From December 2012- March 2013



- The number of cases per month still remains higher than the 2011 average
- The number of cases reported was lower than the average number of cases per month in 2012.
- Threshold alerts have diminished in all subpopulations except MSM 45+ years of age.

What will continue?

- The use of STD clinic protocols including guidance for abbreviated medical assessments
- Syphilis case conferences training between nursing and DIS staff
- STD testing and treatment at community-based venues using licensed vocational nurses and lab tech
- Expanded community-based STD clinical services at CBOs and Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Quarterly data management training for STD clinical staff
- A full serviced Mobile STD Clinic with fully dedicated staff: (Nurse; CMA; Microbiologist II; DIS)
- Community collaboration and mobilization activities